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The Press as a Weapon

MOSCOW, Aug. 22 — Vladimir I. Lenin began his revolutionary career as a journalist, working on the emigre paper Iskra (The Spark) in the early years of this century.

The founder of the Soviet state was a great believer in the power of the press—not its power to inform, but its power to agitate and organize revolutionaries.

That tradition still dominates Soviet journalism. Izvestia put it well in an editorial marking “press day” last year: “Newspapers are a mighty weapon for the party in that great and complex task of teaching Communist ideology to the people, in shaping a new individual who is an active builder of communism, and in the struggle with capitalism.”

Izvestia did not mention news.

Lenin personally helped found the first major Soviet papers. After 55 years of Soviet communism there are nine national dailies of importance:

- Pravda, organ of the Communist Party, circulation 10 million.
- Izvestia, organ of the government, 8 million.
- Komsomolskaya Pravda, organ of the Young Communist League, 8.4 million.
- Rural Life, a Central Committee paper on agricultural affairs, 7 million.
- Trud, organ of the trade unions, 6 million.
- Soviet Sport, a daily sports paper, 3.45 million.
- Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), organ of the Ministry of Defense, 2.65 million.
- Soviet Russia, a general-interest paper of the Central Committee, 2.5 million.
- Socialist Industry, an economic paper, 850,000.